

What is claimed is:

1. An electronic transaction system for making a request for estimating or ordering an article or  
5 service required by an organization to a vendor outside the organization comprising:

a processing unit installed inside the organization and having input means for inputting an estimate or order request and inputting information  
10 related to the request on the basis of information sent from the vendor after the request has been made; and

a management unit for managing communications between the processing unit in the organization and  
15 a processing unit in the vendor company, the management unit including:

information entry means installed inside the organization for entering data input by the input means of the processing unit in the organization;

20 transmission means for transmitting the estimate or order request entered into the information entry means installed in the organization and request-related data input later as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company; and

25 entry means installed outside the organization for

transmitting data used by the vendor to make a reply to the estimate or order request as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company and entering data input and sent by the processing unit in the vendor company.

2. The electronic transaction system according to claim 1, wherein if, when an order for an article or service is sent to the vendor, and an estimate reply has not been obtained from the vendor, a request to estimate the article or service is made to the vendor before the order is sent and the order is then sent after a reply to the estimate request has been received.

3. The electronic transaction system according to claim 2, wherein, when replies to the estimate request are obtained from two or more vendors, an order request is automatically made to a vendor that fulfills predetermined evaluation criteria.

4. The electronic transaction system according to claim 1, wherein the both the entry means installed inside and outside the organization store data indicating that acceptance inspection of the article

or service has been made in the organization, and the management unit presents that data in the entry means installed inside or outside the organization together with the data related to the request.

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5. The electronic transaction system according to claim 1, wherein when the vendor accepts the order, the management unit allows the processing unit installed in the vendor company to print a statement of delivery.

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6. The electronic transaction system according to claim 1, wherein the management unit obtains the date on which the vendor delivered the article or the service from the vendor and stores it in the entry means installed inside and outside the organization.

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7. An electronic transaction system for making a request for ordering articles or services required by an organization to vendors outside the organization comprising:

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first processing units installed in department offices of the organization for inputting order requests and a second processing unit installed inside the organization for managing estimate or order

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requests made by the first processing units, wherein  
the second processing unit including management  
means for managing dates of delivery of articles or  
services input from processing units installed in the  
5 vendor companies and acceptance processing means for  
determining, for each first processing unit that makes  
a new estimate or order request, the presence or  
absence of order requests made by that first  
processing unit for which acceptance inspection of an  
10 article or service delivered has not been made within  
a predetermined period of time after its date of  
delivery and refusing the new request when the  
acceptance inspection has not been made.

15 8. An electronic transaction management unit for  
managing communications between a processing unit  
installed inside an organization for making a request  
for estimating or ordering an article or service and  
a processing unit installed in a vendor company  
20 outside the organization comprising:

information entry means installed inside the  
organization for entering data input by the input  
means of the processing unit in the organization;

transmission means for transmitting the estimate  
25 or order request entered into the information entry

means installed in the organization and request-related data input later as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company; and

5 entry means installed outside the organization for transmitting data used by the vendor to make a reply to the estimate or order request as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company and entering data input and sent by the processing unit in the vendor company.

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9. The electronic transaction management unit according to claim 8, wherein the management unit manages communications related to estimates or orders made by a plurality of organizations.

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10. A computer-readable storage medium for allowing a computer to performs the functions of:

managing estimate requests or order requests made by first processing units installed in a plurality of departments in an organization;

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managing dates of delivery of articles or services input by processing units installed in vendor companies outside the organization in response to order requests made by the first processing units; and

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for a first processing unit that makes a new estimate or order request, deciding the presence or absence of an order request for which acceptance inspection of an article or service delivered has not  
5 been made within a predetermined period of time after its date of delivery and refusing acceptance of the new request when the acceptance inspection has not yet been made.

10 11. A computer-readable storage medium for allowing a computer to perform the functions of:

entering data input by input means of a processing unit installed inside an organization;

transmitting an estimate or order request entered  
15 and data related to the request input later as requested by a processing unit installed in a vendor company outside the organization; and

transmitting data used by the vendor to make a reply to the estimate or order request as requested  
20 by the processing unit in the vendor company and entering data input and transmitted by the processing unit in the vendor company.